



Missouri Department of Higher Education

Higher Education Headlines

August 3, 2015

Note: A link will no longer work for some news stories. Those stories appear at the end of this document, as indicated.

[Mizzou online extends discount to community college grads, Aug. 1](#)

[Innovation keeps higher education costs down, Aug. 1](#)

[Petitioner's seek Nixon's help fighting tuition, aid limits for some immigrant students, July 31](#)

[DACA students in Missouri want suddenly higher tuitions reversed, July 31](#)

[What is a work-ready community, July 30](#)

[MSU proposes way to keep tuition flat in 2016-17, July 30](#)

[Immigrant students deliver petitions to Gov. Nixon, July 30](#)

[Missouri's cruel treatment of undocumented students, July 29](#)

[State education boards discuss teacher prep, certification, July 29](#)

[The quest for balance between teacher prep and diversity for aspiring Mo. teachers, July 28](#)

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[Missouri rejects lawmakers' attempt to block immigrants from receiving scholarships, July 28](#)

Missouri is second state to protect campus free speech, July 28

Nixon wants veto support for A+ scholarship bill, July 28

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Some immigrant students face doubt over Missouri college aid, July 28 (See story below)

Nixon seeks support from superintendents against veto override, July 28

Some immigrant students face doubt over Missouri college aid

The Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – With the fall semester set to begin in weeks for many Missouri colleges and universities, students whose parents brought them illegally to the U.S. still face uncertainty regarding financial aid for the upcoming school year.

At issue are two pieces of legislation passed by the state's Republican-led Legislature this session: one blocking the A+ Scholarship from going to those immigrants and another that also sought to require schools to charge those students their international rate of tuition.

State officials, lawmakers and others disagree on whether the changes are in effect for the upcoming school year. That uncertainty, state officials and a group aimed at helping students pay for college say, could mean surprises and higher-than-expected tuition bills for some immigrants.

Missouri's Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon earlier this month vetoed the bill that would require students be permanent residents or legal citizens to receive the state's A+ Scholarship, which provides two years of free tuition at community colleges for students who complete community service and attain a certain grade-point average, among other requirements. A memo from Department of Higher Education Commissioner David Russell sent this past week confirmed that means the scholarships still are available to those immigrant students.

But in practice, the status of the scholarship is not certain.

Lawmakers might try to override Nixon's veto with a two-thirds majority vote during an upcoming Sept. 16 session.

An override could mean some immigrant students, likely already enrolled by the time of a possible September veto, pay more than they planned for in tuition, said Karissa Anderson, the manager of advocacy and policy research at the Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis.

That's because colleges are reimbursed the students' tuition by the state, Department of Higher Education Deputy Commissioner Leroy Wade said, and schools have until early January to request reimbursement.

Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick, a Shell Knob Republican who handled the bill in the House, said it's unclear whether any students would have had enough time to qualify for the scholarship anyway since a Department of Higher Education rule change clarifying certain immigrant students' eligibility for the program went into effect in March.

Further complicating matters is disputed language in a budget bill passed this year that also was aimed at blocking state-funded scholarships from going to students with an unlawful immigration status and requiring that public colleges and universities charge those students their international tuition rate.

Russell's memo notes that the policy, included in what's called the title of a bill outlining the budget for the department but not in the core of the legislation, is not legally binding in terms of offering the A+ Scholarship. The memo did not offer guidance on the applicability of the tuition rate requirement, leaving that up to colleges.

"The language is pretty explicit," said Fitzpatrick, who is vice chair of a House budget committee. "If the department chooses to ignore it, then I'm sure we'll take that into consideration when we write the budget next year."

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reports that certain immigrant students attending the University of Missouri-St. Louis, for example, no longer qualify for the resident and metropolitan rate of tuition. For students this fall, that would mean paying about \$10,200 for 12 credit hours instead of about \$4,000.

Chancellor Thomas George has said the university will use private funds from the school's endowment for the next two years to make up the difference in tuition for current students, the newspaper reports.

Anderson said the Scholarship Foundation now is also advising immigrant students without lawful status that out-of-state public colleges, such as universities in Illinois, or private colleges might be a cheaper option.

<http://www.kansascity.com/news/government-politics/article29090236.html>

Stop the insanity: Missouri must help, not hurt, immigrant college students

BY MARY SANCHEZ

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For the love of God, would an elected official with a bit of gumption step up and press the Missouri attorney general for a legal reading?

Hundreds of Missouri immigrant college students are caught in a bind, learning only weeks before fall semester begins that their tuition is being doubled or, in some cases, tripled. The reason is because a handful of Republican legislators decided to tuck a language change into the top of the higher-education appropriations bill solely to target the so-called Dreamer students. These are children who were brought by their parents to the U.S. without legal status.

Contrary to moronic interpretations that have long hounded these students, they didn't choose to land in this situation. Most came to the U.S. years ago, often as elementary-age kids or younger. Toddlers don't "sneak" across the border. Besides, the students in question have gained a lawful presence from the Department of Homeland Security through an executive order.

They are graduates of Missouri high schools. They aren't asking for handouts. They are academically qualified and want to pay their in-state tuition and fees. But most won't be able to afford college if the fees are doubled or tripled to the rate of international fees.

Gov. Jay Nixon, the Department of Higher Education and many educators all believe that the little trick the legislators pulled isn't legally binding. But Nixon hasn't followed up with any action. The wording change is in the preamble, not the bill itself. And the legislators didn't go through the normal legislative process.

No one wants to risk the backlash of petty politicians who might cut funding to other higher-education programs in retaliation for being challenged.

Instead, universities are touting that they are finding private funding to help the students already enrolled. That's laudable, but that is a stopgap — a remedy for this semester and a save that may not come through for all of the affected students.

Kansas colleges and universities are also lining up to help. Kansas out-of-state fees may be cheaper than Missouri international rates. But there are transportation and other issues to work out, making such transfers difficult for many.

This insanity could be stopped in its tracks. Get a legal reading. If the legislators acted unlawfully, then the students should be able to attend the Missouri institutions where they are already accepted and where they are ready to pay their in-state tuition.

Classes begin soon. These students deserve their seats.

<http://www.kansascity.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/mary-sanchez/article29245153.html>